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COMMITTEE ON CONFERENCES

DRAFT CALENDAR OF CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR 1982-1983

Introductory note by the Secretariat

1. In accordance with its terms of reference and paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 3491 (XXX) the Committee on Conferences will be required to submit to the General Assembly, at its thirty-sixth session, the draft calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations for the biennium 1982-1983.

2. The calendar, which is contained in an addendum to this document, was drawn up on the basis of all established principles as approved by the General Assembly in various resolutions and decisions. 1/ All pertinent decisions taken by the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session for 1981 (resolution 1981/84) on this subject are fully reflected in the present calendar. In that connexion the Committee may wish to note that the Council requested the General Assembly to consider at its thirty-sixth session the feasibility of altering the dates of the sessions of the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme so that its reports may be submitted in good time to the Economic and Social Council at its second regular sessions of 1982 and 1983.

3. As regards UNCTAD, the Trade and Development Board at its twenty-third session, from 28 September to 9 October 1981 is expected to act on questions related to UNCTAD's calendar and will report thereon to the General Assembly (forthcoming document A/36/15).

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 32 (A/34/32, para. 32).

4. The Committee on Conferences may wish to consider the following deviations from established practices incorporated in the draft calendar:

(a) World Food Council: at its seventh session the Council decided to convene its eighth ministerial session in Dacca from 20 to 24 September 1982 at the invitation of the Government of Bangladesh. As the host Government had indicated these dates as the most convenient ones, the Council decided to request an exception from General Assembly decision 34/401 and paragraph 4 of resolution 35/10 A setting 1 September as the deadline for the completion of reports of subsidiary organs of the Assembly.

(b) UNCITRAL - Working Group on International Contract Practices: in accordance with the principle of rotation of UNCITRAL and its subsidiary bodies between Vienna and New York, the next session of this Working Group would have to be held in Vienna from 16 to 26 February 1982. UNCITRAL, at its fourteenth session, requested, however, that the venue for this session should be New York so as to allow, in keeping with the established frequency of sessions of UNCITRAL's working groups, the holding of another session in autumn 1982, if required. Such a session would then have to take place in Vienna, as in line with General Assembly decision 34/401 no subsidiary organ of the Assembly would be permitted to meet at Headquarters during a regular session of the Assembly. UNCITRAL itself is expected to review the need for a further session of this Working Group at its fifteenth session in July/August 1982.

5. The Secretariat further wishes to draw the attention to an undesirable overlap in the 1982 schedule of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and the Human Rights Committee, which are heavy users of documentation and summary records. Both treaty bodies are currently scheduled for the period 22 March to 9 April 1982 at Headquarters. The Department of Conference Services has proposed that CERD be rescheduled to meet from 1 to 19 March 1982 and CERD is expected to take a decision on its schedule towards the end of its current session, ending on 21 August 1981.

6. By paragraph 5 of its resolution 35/5 the General Assembly requested the Committee on Conferences to take into account in the preparation of future calendars of conferences and meetings that the duration of the sessions of subsidiary organs of the General Assembly should be reduced and that such organs should make a greater effort to schedule their meetings on a biennial basis. Furthermore, the Assembly, by paragraph 5 of resolution 35/10 A, requested the Committee on Conferences, when preparing the biennial calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations for 1982-1983, to propose, on the basis of past experience and after due consultations with the subsidiary organs concerned, the shortening of sessions of subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly and to recommend, if appropirate, bodies which could begin to meet on a biennial basis for consideration by the Assembly.

7. As all members of the Committee are aware, the Chairman of the Committee, upon the advice of a working group of the Committee, has approached the Chairmen of several subsidiary organs in that regard. Thus far, the Committee may wish to note that the Committee on Contributions subsequently decided to adjust its pattern of meetings to meet the concerns expressed by the Assembly. Henceforth, the Committee on Contributions will hold a four-week session when reviewing the scale of assessments (1982) and two-week sessions in the years in-between such reviews.

8. By its resolution 33/55, the General Assembly approved a recommendation by the Committee on Conferences (A/33/32, Vol.I, para. 94, recommendation 9), which read:

"The Committee, noting that the number of special United Nations conferences in past years has grown beyond the limit set forth in General Assembly resolution 2609 (XXIV), recommends that the Assembly should keep the question of the number of special conferences to be held in future years under constant review, bearing in mind the recommendation made by the Joint Inspection Unit that in any given year no more than five special conferences, that is, not more than one in each of the different fields of activity, be convened. The Committee further recommends that the Assembly should affirm that no more than one special conference should be convened at the same time."

9. In that connexion the Committee on Conferences may wish to inform the General Assembly that the following special conferences are scheduled to be held during the biennium 1982-1983:

1982

Second Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament	May/July (5 weeks)	New York
World Assembly on Aging	26 July - 6 August	Vienna
Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space	9-21 August	Vienna
Fourth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names	24 August - 14 September	Geneva

1983

Second World Conference to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination	To be determined	To be determined
United Nations Conference for the Promotion of International Co-operation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy	To be determined	To be determined
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, sixth session	To be determined	To be determined

10. Furthermore, the Committee may recall paragraph (g) of General Assembly decision 33/417, by which the Assembly instructed the Committee on Conferences, in establishing calendars of conferences and meetings, in the light of the concerns and priorities of the international community, to take into account the relative distribution of conferences and meetings in prior years by major fields of activity, and to bring to the attention of the General Assembly any notable variation in the pattern of activity that might have implications for the capacity of the Secretariat to provide adequate conference services to the various bodies concerned, or for the ability of Member States to participate in the contemplated schedule of meetings.

11. In light of subsequent discussions by the Committee on Conferences on the feasibility of a quota system, the Committee did not implement the Assembly's request when preparing in 1979 the draft biennial calendar 1980-1981. Accordingly, and pending clarification of several issues involved, the Secretariat is not submitting pertinent data at this stage.

12. Finally, the Committee may wish to note that the Economic and Social Council, at its second regular session for 1981, recommended that "the General Assembly should undertake, at its thirty-sixth session and on a priority basis, a thorough examination of the over-all problem of documentation in the United Nations, under the item entitled 'Pattern of Conferences: Report of the Committee on Conferences', and also recommends that it should entrust to the Committee on Conferences the question of a review of the calendar of conferences and meetings for the next biennium, with particular reference to the economic and social fields, with a view to adjusting the calendar to the servicing capacities within the Secretariat, taking into account the problems that are occurring with regard to the timely submission and dissemination of documentation, and should request the Committee to report thereon to the Economic and Social Council at its first regular session of 1982."